DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 179 297 PS 011 034

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TITLE Program Planning Guide: Fall, 1979.
INSTITUTION Maryland Univ., College Park. Head Start Regional Resource and Training Center.
SPONS AGENCY Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 79
CONTRACT ACYF-130-78-2
NOTE 22p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Cooperation; Community Study; Compensatory Education; Early Childhood Education; *Educational Objectives; *Educational Strategies; *Group Dynamics; Management; Participation; *Program Administration; *Program Planning
IDENTIFIERS *Participatory Management; *Project Head Start

ABSTRACT

This resource guide is written for Head Start Directors, Component Coordinators, other staff and parents who share in the task of developing program plans. In the introduction, the concept of participatory management is defined. Advantages and disadvantages of participatory management and required skills for the effective use of participatory management are listed. A major section of the guide focuses on the development of plans through the integration of community needs assessment data with Head Start Performance Standards. A way of organizing the data gathering and synthesizing activities by establishing component work groups is suggested. As Head Start Performance Standards require a written plan for each program component, specific program goals, objectives and action steps must be formulated. The final section of the guide details features of a good component plan and indicates how to progress from the preliminary planning stages to the completion of a detailed component plan. Also included in the guide are two examples of plan format and a leader's guide for workshops designed to increase skill in developing plans. (Author/RH)

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FALL, 1979

PROGRAM PLANNING GUIDE

PS011034

HEAD START RESOURCE AND TRAINING CENTER

Conferences and Institutes Division

University of Maryland University College

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide is a result of the combined efforts of the Head Start Resource and Training Center staff. The Center conducted a series of training conferences on program planning. The Child Development Training Specialist would like to acknowledge the effort and time of her co-workers during the evolution of the materials included in this Guide. In addition, the support and assistance received by the training team from the Region III DHEW staff was most appreciated.

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Developed under ACYF Contract
Number 130-78-2

INTRODUCTION

This resource guide is written for Head Start Directors, Component Coordinators, other staff and parents--persons who share in the task of developing plans.

Head Start incorporates a unique approach to planning. It requires staff and parents to share in the development of the program. Everyone involved in the program takes a part in the program planning. As a result, it is one of the few organizations in which staff and parents have real decision making power.

A secretary for an electronics firm, for example, is never asked to be involved in the firm's planning. Likewise, a teacher in a high school does not usually assist in the overall planning for the school. In the same way, the consumer (the one receiving the service) seldom becomes actively involved in the development of the program.

Why does Head Start incorporate all levels of staff and parents in the planning process? Because Head Start subscribes to a PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT Philosophy.

What is Participatory Management?

Management is defined as the activity required to get things done through others. Participatory Management means involving the persons providing the service (staff) and the persons receiving the service (parents) in defining what needs to be done as well as in doing it.

Management activities can be divided into three categories: planning, implementation and evaluation. In Participatory Management the servers and those being served all share in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the services provided. They are all involved in setting program goals and objectives and in deciding how those goals and objectives are going to be reached. They have a role in implementing the decisions and they should also be actively involved in evaluating the success of program activities.

Advantages of Participatory Management

There are some significant advantages to using a Participatory Management system. Some of the advantages include:

- a resultant greater commitment of staff and parents to the goals of the organization
- improved quality of services because the consumers have a say
- greater opportunity for staff development--people learn best from each other and from theory and practice
- greater sharing of the staff and parents in the successes of the program

Disadvantages of Participatory Management

There are, however, a number of disadvantages to using Participatory Management. For example:

- it frequently uncovers more needs than the organization can deal with--necessitating priority setting
- it is more time consuming--directions from the top down often yield faster results whereas this system takes about 3-5 years to implement fully
- it requires good yearly evaluations which often focus on shortcomings and may jeapordize staff morale
- it requires more paperwork and more meetings
- it can trigger more change than some staff members can deal with comfortably

Skills Required for Effective Participatory Management

This style of management requires skills that are somewhat different from those needed to function under other management styles.

First, there is an increased need for information sharing and communication. Hence all staff members need the ability:

- to express themselves in writing
- to express themselves to all levels of staff and parents
- to express themselves to people at all levels of other organizations when they coordinate services with them
- to listen--even to negative feedback
- to manage conflict
- to synthesize a large amount of data
- to make decisions about priorities

Secondly, persons need skills to exhibit a variety of leadership styles. For example:

- the ability to work with groups as a follower
- the ability to problem solve with a group
- the ability to make decisions

In addition, Participatory Management requires skills to supervise others in order to help them develop their potential. Effective supervision requires the ability:

- to delegate effectively
- to establish performance outcomes
- to evaluate achievement
- to appraise performance
- to share leadership responsibility

And finally, Participatory Management requires the ability to manage time effectively.

Elements of Management Systems

The major elements of any management system are:

- Planning
- Implementation
- Evaluation

Planning can be defined as the process of deciding in advance what is to be done. During the planning phase, an organization must decide on long and short range goals and objectives. An agency must decide on its long range goals first. Then it can establish specific objectives and strategies to achieve the long range goals.

Planning and implementations are interrelated. The more well planned an organization is (the clearer its long and short range goals and objectives) the easier it will be to carry out the plan.

The third aspect of management systems is evaluation. Effective organizations evaluate their services periodically. The information gained through the evaluation is then fed into subsequent planning to maximize the effective aspects of the program and to eliminate the ineffective and/or harmful elements.

This guide focuses on the planning phase of Head Start programs. However, the reader is advised to keep the following information within the context presented here, i.e. that a truly effective organization must have effective planners, effective implementors and effective evaluators.

THE HEAD START PROCESS FOR PLANNING

The Head Start Performance Standards provide staff with guidance to assure maximum participation in the planning process. The Standards call for a representative number of parents and staff to come together to:

1. analyze the needs of the community served

2. analyze the Performance Standard's goals and objectives

Their ultimate task is to take information from the needs assessment and the Performance Standards and develop a written plan for each component (Education, Health, Nutrition, Social Services, and Parent Involvement). In Region III, programs are also required to write an administrative plan. In addition, many programs choose to develop a separate handicap plan rather than weave the handicap services throughout the regular component plans.

Analyzing the community needs

Parents and staff who participate in the planning process need information regarding the needs of the local community. A community needs assessment is usually conducted. It is simply a systematic and thorough look at the needs of a specific community. Usually a needs assessment is done at the time of the original grant application. It is used as a justification for receiving federal funds to operate a Head Start program. The needs assessment should be revised yearly, however, to assure that current information on community needs is used for developing an up-to-date plan.

The following information should become evident through a community needs assessment:

- geographical distribution of low income families
- working patterns of parents
- primary language of families
- available community resources
- specific educational, economic and social needs of families

Information regarding the needs of the families served can also be obtained from members of the various Head Start committees (Health Advisory Committee, Policy Council and/or Committees, Career Development Committees, etc.). In addition, the umbrella agency (ex. Community Action Agency) can often provide vital information and experience in dealing with the problems and needs of the community.

Analyzing the Performance Standards

The staff and parents responsible for developing the program plan must be familiar with the goals and objectives of the Head Start programs. They should have a chance to analyze the Performance Standards and any other relevant directives from the National or Regional HEW offices. In addition, the Self-Assessment/Validation Instrument can be helpful in conceptualizing the essential elements needed for compliance with the Standards.

Organizing the Process

Obviously this process of data gathering and synthesizing can get cumbersome. It is therefore important that Head Start programs have an organized way of going about the planning phase.

One highly effective method is to establish component work groups. Parents and staff should participate in each component work group. The Health and Education Performance Standards provide guidelines regarding the composition of the work groups for those two components.

One person--usually the component coordinator--functions as leader/facilitator. Information on community needs and the Performance Standards should be discussed in detail. The group must then discuss the specific elements to be included in the component plan. These elements will be discussed in the next section of this guide.

The discussion should result in a first draft of the component plan. The draft can then be typed and circulated to members of the component work group and others in the program for comment, additions and questions. The leader and/or the group can then proceed with the final draft.

In organizing and implementing component work groups similar to the one just described, it is important that members understand their task and that a realistic timetable is established at the beginning. One of the main tasks of the facilitator is to help the group stay on its assigned task, namely, the development of a component plan.

A variation of the component work group is to establish permanent component committess as sub-committees of the Policy Council/Committee. The Policy Council by-laws should then be revised to include the committees, their composition and functions. The component coordinators assume responsibility for working with the committee which represents their component. Members of the Policy Council serve on the committee along with other parents and staff. The committees submit periodic progress reports to the Policy Council which then become part of the Council minutes. This method assures viable Parent Involvement in the ongoing planning for the program.

In summary, it should be stated that the importance of the group process used at the local level cannot be emphasized too much. The inclusion of staff and parents in the process is of utmost importance. Their inclusion is the assurance that Participatory Management is indeed operable in the local Head Start program.

Programs should find ways to document that the process was used. Documentation can be obtained by keeping minutes of the work group sessions. The minutes should include the names of persons attending each meeting. Although one person, most probably the component coordinator, will bear the major responsibility for final drafting of the component plan, the plan will have resulted from the best efforts of staff and parents.

The next section of this guide deals with the component plan. It will focus on the content and format of an effective plan.

DEVELOPING COMPONENT PLANS

The Head Start Performance Standards require a written plan for each component. The written plan should be a result of the planning by staff and parents that was described in the preceding section. As stated earlier, an effective planning process results in program goals and objectives as well as action steps to reach those goals and objectives. This planning is the key to the development of a good Head Start program.

Paul Vicinanza* likens the building of a good Head Start project to the building of a good house. He says:

> "Building a good Head Start project is much like building a good house. Before you build a house you must analyze your family's needs with regard to space, location, bathroom (s), appliances, etc. Then you must reconcile your needs with your budget, finding that you must set some priority on meeting your basic needs first before attempting to meet what may be considered some of the extras. The beginning of good child development program planning starts with a realistic, budget limited, needs assessment and the ability to place relative priority on these assessed needs.
>
> After you know what needs you have, you then begin developing your plans to meet these needs. That is, you begin to develop some detailed methods and procedures for what you are going to have done before you actually start doing it. In building your house you or your hired architect will have to design into the plan what the overall specific size and shape of the house will be as well as the specific room features, size of your land, etc. Based on budget and other considerations, you will have to decide what materials and methods of construction you will use. More than likely, you will have to obtain permits to build. Your plan will also have to be presented to the local government so that they can ascertain if the intended house meets all legal requirements. Finally, you will hire competent builders, plumbers, and electricians who will take the materials and methods called for in your plans and build you house. A good child development program has some specific detailed methods and procedure wirtten beforehand for meeting the developmental needs of the children and families they expect to serve. Because Head Start is a project, its plans become extensive and require ambition and imagination as well as a design that hopefully will have the outcome of bringing about a greater degree of "social competence" in the children it serves.

*Taken from Office of Child Development memorandum, "Education Planning Materials" by Paul Vincinanza, Region III Child Development Specialist, January 14, 1974.

Specifically, good plans let all the people who are building a Head Start project know ahead of time what it is they hope to accomplish, how you expect to do it, who is responsible for accomplishing it, when they will do it, where it will be done, and allows them to determine if they accomplished what they set out to do.

In developing your program plans, it is important to remember that this will be your program. While it shares similarity with other programs because you all must adhere to the same basic goals, objectives and standards, it becomes different because it reflects your needs, your creativity, your ability, your beliefs, and your philosophy. After determining your needs, it is important that your program knows it should express its creativity and ability, and that it has the right if not the necessity, to express its beliefs and philosophy so long as it adheres to Head Start's basic goals, objectives and standards. Therefore, in developing your plan, it will be helpful to all those who will use it if you, the "program community", take the time to express your creativity and ability as well as your beliefs and philosophy.

These expressions will make the plan yours and it will help put in context many of the groups of "what's, who's, how's, when's, where's and if's" that may often be misunderstood in the body of the plan.

Finally, as a house does not become a hope until it is built, moved into, furnished and adjusted to your newly discovered needs--"lived in"--Head Start does not become a comprehensive child development program until you start meeting the actual needs of the children and families you are currently serving.

A good component plan, then, answers the following questions:

1. What is it you hope to accomplish? (goals and oblectives)

2. How will you accomplish your stated goals/objectives? (strategies or action steps)

3. Who is responsible for carrying out the steps? (person responsible)

4. When will the actions be provided? (time)"

A component plan which answers these four questions is a valuable work plan. In addition, if it has an introductory section, it will be valuable for a number of other purposes. The short introductory section should include the following:

- a brief description of the setting in which the component operates
- relevant staffing patterns for the component
- a statement of program philosophy

This introductory section allows the component plan to stand on its own. It can be used then for the following purposes:

- for orientation purposes--to orient new staff and parents to the purpose and activities of the component
- for evaluation or tracking by administration, supervisors and the Policy Council--to be used by administrators and/or Policy Council as they periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the component plans and make recommendations
- as a work plan--as stated above the strategies (action steps can be useful for staff in determining their priorities and their day to day activities

In order to develop the plan, the planners must have a clear understanding of goals, objectives and strategies and how to develop them.

Goals*

A goal is a statement of a desired condition-something that you want to have. It provides a sense of direction; it helps in assigning priorities; it keeps people from "doing for the sake of doing."

The Performance Standards state: "The overall goal of the Head Start program is to bring about a greater degree of social competence in children of low income families". (p.1)

This is obviously a very broad goal toward which the whole program is working. Each component can determine several goals toward which that component is moving. Although these component goals will be relatively broad and need to be broken down, they will not be as broad as the overall Head Start goal stated above.

Component goals should be clearly stated. A number of people will probably be working to reach the goal. Others will be directly affected by it. Everyone should have a clear understanding of it.

*The sections "Goals" and "Objectives" were adapted from materials developed by the Contracting Corporation of America, Denver, Colorado.

How do we determine the component goals? Component goals can be determined by following the process outlined in the previous section: by analyzing the community needs and the Head Start Performance Standards of the specific component. The group should then be able to determine several (perhaps 3-6) goals for the specific component. It is particularly important that the goals are all inclusive for each component. That is, it is important that all the major areas covered by the Performance Standards are covered by the set of written goals.

Objectives:

Goals are usually so broad in scope that planning becomes a difficult and frustrating task. A large number and variety of activities would have to be carried out over a long period of time to reach the goal.

It is difficult to determine all the activities that are needed and to arrange those activities in a logical sequence for each goal. In addition, it is easy for a person to loose sight of the purpose of individual activities in relationship to a relatively broad goal.

Therefore goals usually need to be broken down into objectives. Objectives are specific things that must exist (or that we must do) in order to reach our goal.

There are four steps to writing objectives:

Step 1: Begin with the word "to" and follow it with an action verb.

For example:

to provide....

to recruit.....

to write.....

to set up a.....

Step 2: Show a result of the action verb, or, in other words, answer the question, "who or what". For example:

to provide training sessions

to recruit 30 eligible children

to write newsletters

to set up a two-day training session

Step 3: Indicate the target group or answer the question, "for whom or with what" depending on what fits the situation. For example:

to provide training sessions for staff

to recruit 30 eligible children for the X center

to write newsletters for all parents and staff

to set up a two-day training session for officers of the Policy Council

When setting objectives, the group should be sure that all objectives decided upon are really means to get to the overall component goal being discussed. In addition, be sure that the list of objectives is complete that no objectives are omitted.

Strategies

Strategies, sometimes called "Action Steps," are activities involved in obtaining the stated objective. Strategies are ways of using available resources so that the desired result (that stated in the objective) can be achieved. Usually there are many different ways to achieve an objective. Just as there are many different ways to build a house (using different architectual plans, using different building materials etc.) there are many different action steps or strategies that could be used to achieve the objectives.

In deciding which strategies to use it is useful for groups to brainstorm and discuss alternative strategies. After a variety of strategies are discussed, the best strategy for the individual program (given the people involved, the local resources, other circumstances, etc.) should be chosen.

In writing strategies, be sure to include an action verb. However, do not use the work "to". For example:

conduct a parent training needs assessment

conduct a door to door canvass for eligible children

identify training resource persons

The only other things needed for effective strategies are indications of the person bearing the primary responsibility for carrying out the strategy and target dates for completion of the strategies.

Format

The following format can be a useful tool for the writing of component plans.

Goal:			
Objectives What is to be done	Strategies How it is to be done	Person Responsible	Target Date

An excerpt from component plans using this format is illustrated on the following page.

COMPONENT PLANS

GOAL: To provide parents with a variety of experiences in various components which support and enhance their role as principan influence on their child's development.

OBJECTIVES (What is to be done)	STRATEGIES (How it is to be done)	PERSON RESPONSIBLE (Who will do it)	TIME (When it will be done)
1. To provide appropriate training in child development for parents.	• conduct a parent training needs assessment	Parent Involvement Coordinator	August-September
	• provide training sessions based on assessed needs	Parent Involvement Coordinator Education Coordinator	Monthly October-March
	• evaluate the training sessions with input from parents and staff	Parent Involvement Coordinator Education Coordinator	November-April
	• inform parents of relevant sessions conducted by other groups	Parent Involvement Coordinator	October-April
2. To provide experiences (other than training session) which support parents in their role as principal caregiver	• conduct toymaking sessions with parents	Education Coordinator	November, February, March
	• organize trips to appropriate children's museums, etc.	Parent Involvement Coordinator	April
	• conduct a parent-child picnic day	Parent Involvement Coordinator Social Service Coordinator Education Coordinator	May
3. To develop skills in the total staff to enable them to support parents as the principal influence on their child's development	• provide a session for the total staff on communicating with parents	Parent Involvement Coordinator Social Service Coordinator Education Coordinator	August

WORKSHOP: DEVELOPING WRITTEN PLANS

LEADER'S GUIDE

OVERVIEW

THis workshop is designed for use by local Head Start staff who wish to develop written component plans. It is also appropriate for programs who wish to improve and/or update already existing plans. The activities include a combination of large group discussions and small work group activities. It includes both staff and parents in all activities.

OBJECTIVES

Through this activity participants will:

1. understand the importance of careful planning
2. understand the process for writing component plans
3. analyze the component content of the Performance Standards
4. develop component goals
5. develop objectives for each goal
6. develop strategies for each objective
7. revise the first of the component plans
8. submit component plans to the Policy Council for input and approval

TIMELINE

To result in effective component plans, it is suggested that this workshop be spread over several weeks. Staff and parents should gather together for the initial phase (Parts I and II) for one or two full day sessions. Then individual work groups can schedule their own meeting time to complete Part III.

The following timelines are only suggestions. Some programs may need to shift these times according to their own needs:

I. Overview:	Objective 1	large group	60 minutes
II. Planning Process	Objective 2	Brainstorm and Discussion	90 minutes
III. Component Plans	Objective 3	small group	90 minutes
	Objective 4	small group	60 minutes
	Objective 5	small group	90 minutes

III. Component Plans (continued)

Objective 6	small group	120 minutes
Objective 7	distribution and input	1-2 weeks
Objective 8	Policy Council Meeting	

PROCEDURE

The workshop leader should be thoroughly familiar with these procedures before attempting to implement them. In some cases alternate strategies are indicated. In these cases, the work "or" indicates that the leader is free to choose either of the workshop strategies for that objective.

Part I Overview of Program Planning (approximately 60 minutes)

Introduce the major concepts discussed in the Introduction of the Program Planning Guide (pp. 1-3) by:

- discussing the text with the total staff using a board/flip chart to highlight the major concepts

or

- having participants read pp. 1-3 quietly to themselves first and then discussing the major concepts.

In either case the following concepts should be highlighted:

- Participatory Management
- The appropriate persons to be involved in planning
- The elements of planning, implementation and evaluation

Part II The Planning Process (approximately 120 minutes)

Brainstorm the following questions as a total group or in small groups of 4-8 persons:

- What are the sources of data needed for the writing of component plans?
- How can we get effective input in the writing of plans from staff? from parents?

Assist the staff in organizing into component work groups by discussing the following questions:

- How should we organize into groups to develop component work groups?

After discussing the above question:

- Who should be in each work group?

Be sure that there are staff and parents represented in each group. Be sure that each group has a leader or will elect a leader. Record the names of persons for each work group on the board/flip chart.

Part III Writing Component Plans (approximately 6-8 hours)

1. Using the Performance Standards, develop an outline of the major items contained in your component section (approximately 90 minutes)

2. Develop 3-6 goals to cover the major items contained in your outline of the Performance Standards (approximately 60 minutes)

3. Develop objectives for each goal developed above (approximately 90 minutes)

4. Develop strategies (action steps) for each component objective (approximately 120 minutes) by

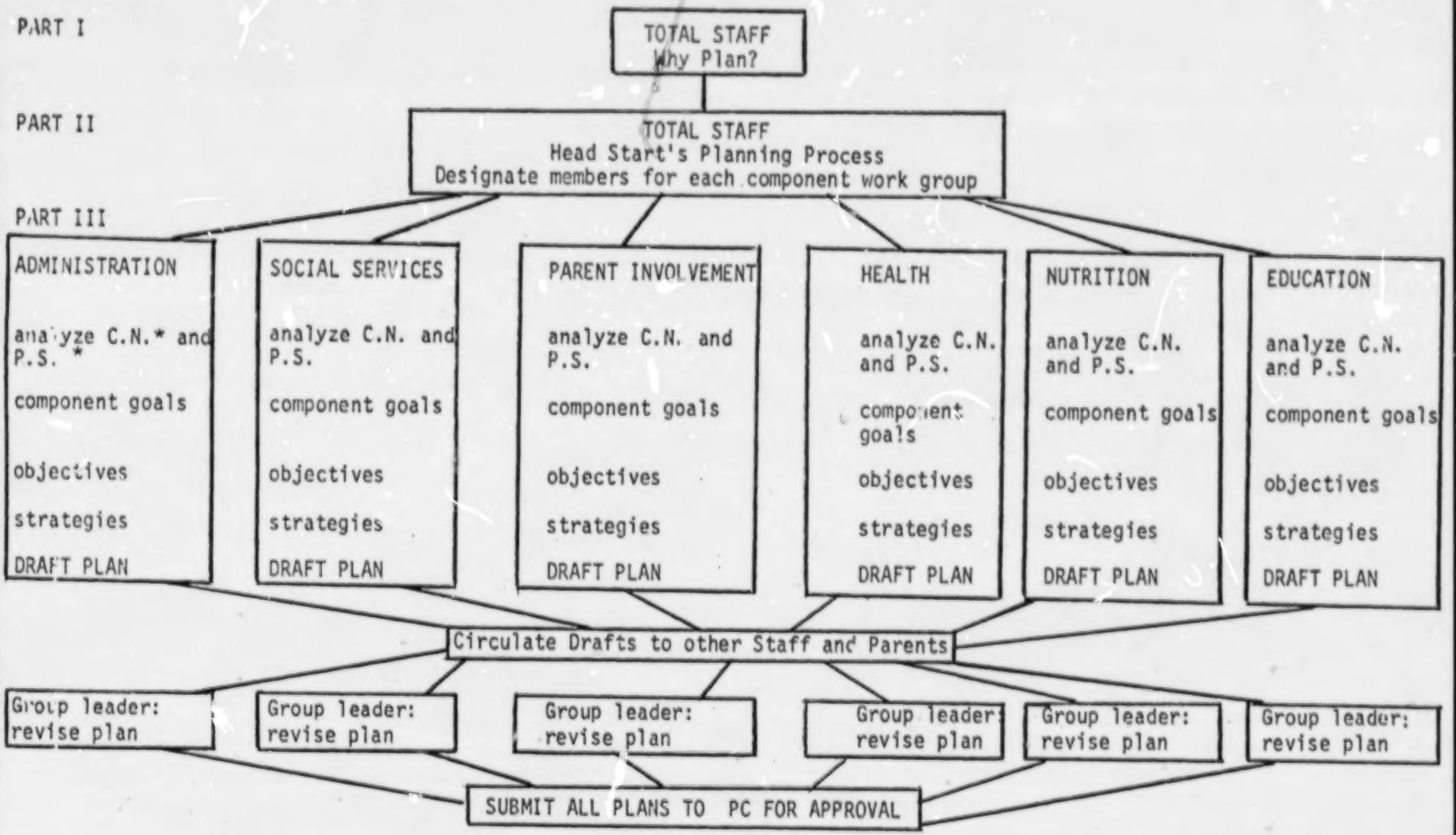
   - brainstorming alternate strategies for each objective
   - determining the most effective strategies for each objective
   - determing the person bearing the major responsibility for each strategy and a realistic timeline for each one

5. After the goals, objectives and strategies have been developed in the small groups, editing should be done by the component coordinator and the draft should be typed. The typed draft should then be circulated to other staff and parents for comments and suggestions. (Allow 1-2 weeks time for persons to review the draft and return it with recommendations.) It is particularly helpful if each component work group has the same deadline for the circulation of the drafts, that way all component plans will be circulated and ready for final review at the same time.

   The component coordinators should then revise the draft to reflect the suggestions and recommendations received from those reviewing it.

6. Finally, a copy of the typed, revised draft should be submitted to the Parent Policy Council for further comments and approval.

WORKSHOP FLOW CHART



*C.N.=Community Needs; P.S.=Performance Standards